

**BULLETIN OF THE
TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.**
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Editor Andrew Walsh

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of backgrounds and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (03 6227 8638) for further information, or write to GPO Box 68A Hobart 7001. Bulletin or website articles to Andrew Walsh (146 Misty Hill Rd. Mountain River 7109, 03 62 664543).

PROGRAM

General meetings start at 7:45pm on the first Thursday of the month in the Life Sciences Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting at 10am outside the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance, Macquarie St. *If you are planning to attend an outing but not the meeting prior, check as to the timing of the excursion as sometimes unforeseen changes occur.*

5th Nov Nick Mooney (PWS)- **Raptors**

8th Nov (Sun) Field trip related to raptors. Exact destination to be discussed at Nov 5th meeting.

3rd Dec **Members night.** This is an opportunity for members to give a short presentation on a topic of their choice. Don't forget you can also bring along slides. As this is the last meeting for the year we will be holding a bigger supper than normal afterwards so everyone bring along a plate of something to share.

5th Dec (Sat) To be discussed at Members night.

January **No meeting.**

4th Feb Natalie Papworth (Roy. Tas. Bot. Gardens)- **Roadside rescue of native vegetation.**

7th Feb (Sun) A journey to Old Beach to see native roadside vegetation.

4th Mar Mike Pemberton (PWS) **Maram grass in coastal ecosystems.**

Other Activities

The Marine Field Naturalists now meet at the Life Sciences Lecture Theatre at Tas. Uni. Usually at 6pm, 2nd Wednesday of each month.

Nov 11th Barry Bruce. Recovery plan for the Spotted Hand Fish.

Feb 10th Mike Sugden. The reef day/night.

Wildflower Gardens Show

Fri Nov 13th 10am-6pm, Sat 14th 10am-6pm, Sun 15th 10am-4pm.

Adults \$4, Concession \$3, Children \$1. Don't forget we will be holding a display, so if you want to help set it up or contribute display items, turn up on Wednesday 11th or Thursday morning 12th.

JOIN THE CLUB

by Jim Paterson

I'm often confused
By the words that are used
When describing a thing
Like a bird on a wing.

I constantly fail
When naming a snail
But there are among us
Those who name fungus.

I try to remember
What flowers in September
and I'm vague, so it seems
About monotremes.

But nevertheless
I must here confess
I've an interest in bees
and eucalypt trees.

And things under logs
And bubbles and bogs
And whole heaps on things
that haven't got wings.

But my great dismay
Is the people who say
I can't stand exploring
It's terribly boring.

A Letter From Don Hird.

Don Hird has sent Genevieve a letter, so we thought we should publish it in the latest bulletin.

"We expect to return to Tas shortly before Christmas but too late for the December meeting/excursion. We leave here early November but will take 5-6 weeks in all to reach Tas. Things have generally been going well although Hally is staying with her Tas cousins for a couple of months as she had some health problems. She will rejoin us in Queensland for the journey south etc.

Thanks for send the bulletins etc. which I've read with interest while I've been here. One of the frustrations here is having limited access to natural history guides although I've got some reasonable books on tropical reef fish and usually recognise another one or two each time we go snorkelling.

A month or so ago I saw a dugong, (captured by fishermen for kai kai) for the first time. It's hard to guess dugong numbers accurately but to the west is a very large area of shallow lagoon and reef habitat that is sparsely populated by people, so maybe plenty dugongs.

Best regards to all, Don Hird."

Help Wanted!

The Seabird Project begins in October and runs through to March 1999. The project will involve surveying populations of shore birds and migratory waders, and the project needs regular observers to help with the study. People with some experience observing these birds are preferred, but training can be provided. If you would like to volunteer, **call Beatrice Bentley on 6234 6440 as soon as possible!**

WOMBAT

by Charles Thomson (age 10)

The wombat fell asleep
In his burrow so deep
That a birds loudest tweet
Would not wake him from his deep sleep

Outing Reports

Federation of Field Naturalists Weekend, King Island 26-27th Sep

by Andrew Walsh.

About 20 people from around the state (including myself & my wife Amanda, Kevin Bonham and David Ratkowsky) made it to King Island for the Federation Weekend hosted by the local field naturalists club.

The TFNC four flew up on Friday morning, piloted by Rob Taylor's son Matthew (Matthew tells me Rob is having a wonderful time skydiving in Africa and white water rafting down the Zambize river!). Using a hire car we drove to Sea Elephant point (no sea elephants to were seen, or sea for that matter!) where we arrived just in time to watch a sea eagle soar low over the lookout platform. Amanda and I then dropped Kevin and David off somewhere between the lookout and Naracoopa, where they spent the remainder of the afternoon collecting

along the roadside forest, while Amanda & I drove around the island.

That evening the King Island Field Naturalists Club hosted a barbecue at the Grassy accommodation where everyone was staying, and the following Saturday the field trips began. Led by a local who was the last manager of the now closed Scheelite mine, we were given a guided tour of the enormous open cut and the surrounding land on which the mine company had spent two million dollars rehabilitating the site. In the afternoon, the King Island Field Nats led an impressive walk into the Grassy River Gorge. From the air, King Island appears extremely flat, consisting mostly of pasture truncated occasionally by small patches of forest. This appearance conceals the fact that in some places small waterfalls can be found in the bottom of steep gullies.

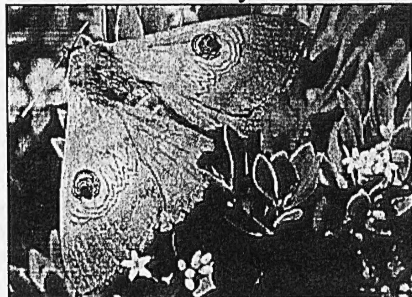


Field Naturalists at the Calcified Forest on King Island on the Federation Weekend 1998.

On the Saturday night we had a very sociable dinner at the local Grassy Club. On the Sunday morning delegates from various clubs met for a short Federation business meeting while remaining club members walked around the Grassy township area.

After the meeting we all drove to the Calcified Forest on the south west side of the island where a short walk through dunes took us to a spectacular landing where dunes had claimed the forest some 5000 years ago, causing a chemical reaction that resulted in calcification of much of the woody tissues of the trees. As the dunes erode, the calcified deposits are exposed revealing eerie bleached stem-like structures.

After lunch we visited the dramatic Seal Rocks, where the Roaring Forties, and the seas they churn up, crash against the literally breathtaking cliffs and rocks. After spending some time exploring the area, the TFNC four had to leave early to catch our flight back to Hobart, which ended a perfect weekend as the flight home took us on a direct diagonal line across Tasmania in crystal clear skies.



Moth found beside track to Calcified Forest, King Island (probably 'Peacock Moth', *Dasyphodia selenophora*). Photo A. Walsh.

PLATYPUS

by Isabella Thomson (age 8)

Platypus beside the river lies
Gone to sleep and closed his eyes
Suddenly he got woken up
By a huge animal that held him up
It wasn't like a gorilla's hand
It was wrapped around him
like rubber-band
Suddenly he found himself flat
On the ground with an elephant
looking straight down at him.

LAND OF THE GREEN SPONGE

by Tam Kincade, April 1997

Howling winds and thick mists
Greet me as I cross the plateau,
Knocking me from my feet
And soaking me from head to toe.

Jagged peaks and spongy ground,
Tiring my legs and rolling my feet
As I plough across Nature's outcast,
This desolate island in the sea.

Who could love a place like this?
Who could never want to leave?
Desolation isn't part of it,
It's Nature you can't believe.

Ageless beauty and rolling plains,
A myriad of lakes and plants,
Gigantic penguin colonies,
And humungous sea-elephants.

My heart will always be here,
Inside me part will want to know-
Are albatross chicks hatching?
Is the plateau covered in snow?

Too soon I leave this beauty
And I will look back to see
That fair majestic land-
Macquarie Island, of the sea.

See last page to find out who won the poetry competition.

October 3rd Hastings Thermal Pool.

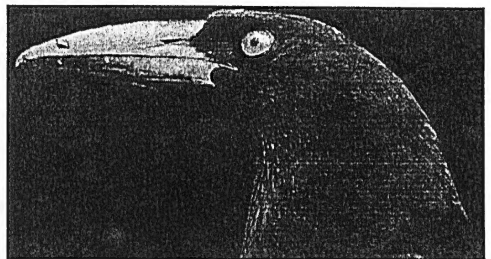


Julia Scott , Marc Gates, Genevieve Gates, Stephen Gates, and Amanda Thomson in the thermal pool at Hastings on the October excursion.

The October excursion visited the Hastings Thermal pool area. Originally it was planned as a follow up to the fascinating talk by Phillip Bethge on *Platypus*, as we were hoping to catch a glimpse of one in the streams nearby the pool. As well, Spotted Tailed Quolls are often observed around the pool during the day. However, it was announced at the October meeting that the club will also host a barbecue to take advantage of the facilities at the pool. This idea was conceived after the last bulletin was mailed out, however the next barbecue will be advertised well in advance so as to give all members and opportunity to attend.

As it transpired, the weather on the Saturday was very bad- cold, windy and raining and only ten members braved the conditions. We were greeted by a Quoll upon arrival, and those brave enough to take a swim observed a Pademelon Wallaby near

the pool. After lunch (which we had to vigorously defend from the marauding Currawongs) we took a stroll around the creek walks. Genevieve found a number of fungi including *Daldinia* (Cramp Ball), *Bertrandia astatogala*, *Entoloma rodwayi*, *Entoloma* sp. and handsome *Stropharia formosa*. After the walk the group visited the Hastings Caves where a fruiting fungus (unidentified by the observers) was seen in the cave.



Currawong at Hastings Thermal Pools. Photo A. Walsh.

And the winner is....



Isabella Thomson



Congratulations Isabella and many thanks to the other entrants of our competition. Isabella's prize will be presented at the meeting in November (5th).